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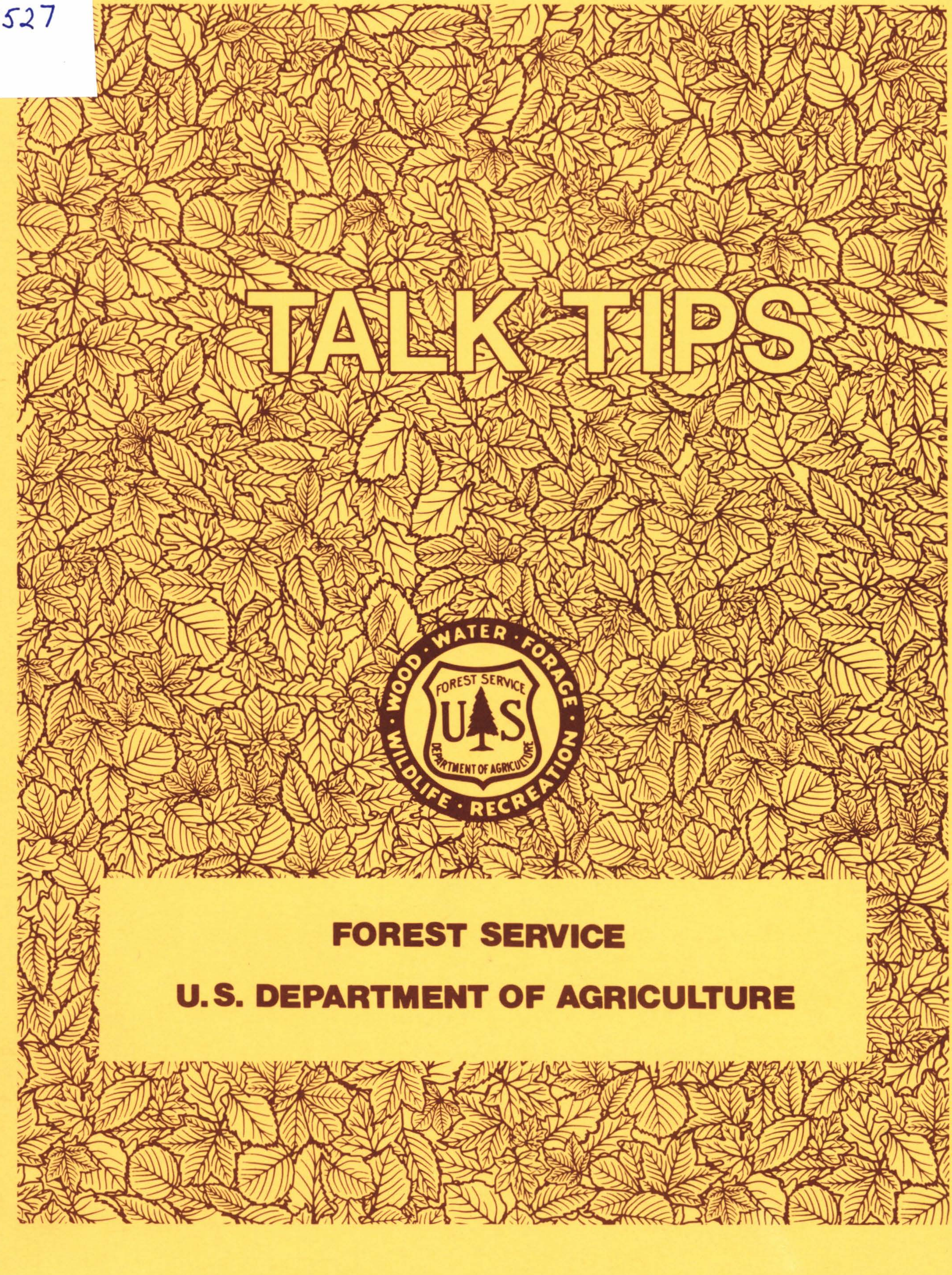

TALK TIPS

FOREST SERVICE

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TALK TIPS

You have consented to present a program on Wednesday to a local service club. The program is to be about a nearby roadless area proposal. Although the date has been on your calendar for three weeks, you "forget" about it until Monday. "Oh, well," you tell a co-worker, "I'll just pull a bunch of scenic slides from the file and give 'em a slide talk."

A junior high science teacher is doing a section on forestry and how it relates to our daily lives. He asked if you could speak to the class next Friday. On Friday morning, you rummage through the publications stocked in a back storeroom and pull out a half dozen on forest products. You plan to hand them out to the class and then ask for questions.

You are to present your District's proposal for trail and road closures to the staff. Since you know the area well, you won't need to prepare any special talk; and since there will be plenty of District maps around the office, you won't need to prepare any visual aids specifically for the presentation. You can outline things on the maps as you talk.

Our spoken word carries a lot of weight. How we prepare for a presentation is usually vividly portrayed by the quality of the presentation. Did we care enough to prepare for it and do it well? Or did we just "wing" it? Accomplished speakers often provide the illusion of quick preparation--they were just "born" good speakers. But often, in the final analysis, they are good speakers because, somewhere along the line, they acquired a great deal of practice and learned the short-cuts of putting together a fine, polished presentation. With just a little effort you, too, can acquire that knack of polish that will make you a good public speaker. Are you willing to make that initial investment?

Prepared by Elizabeth L. Horn, with greatly appreciated assistance from personnel of the Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station and the National Park Service as well as the many co-workers who educate and inform. Ideas and procedures were gleaned from many people and sources, so this booklet is really written by many others, too many to name.

Illustrations by Bonnie Berry
Typing and layout by Irene Lovern

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

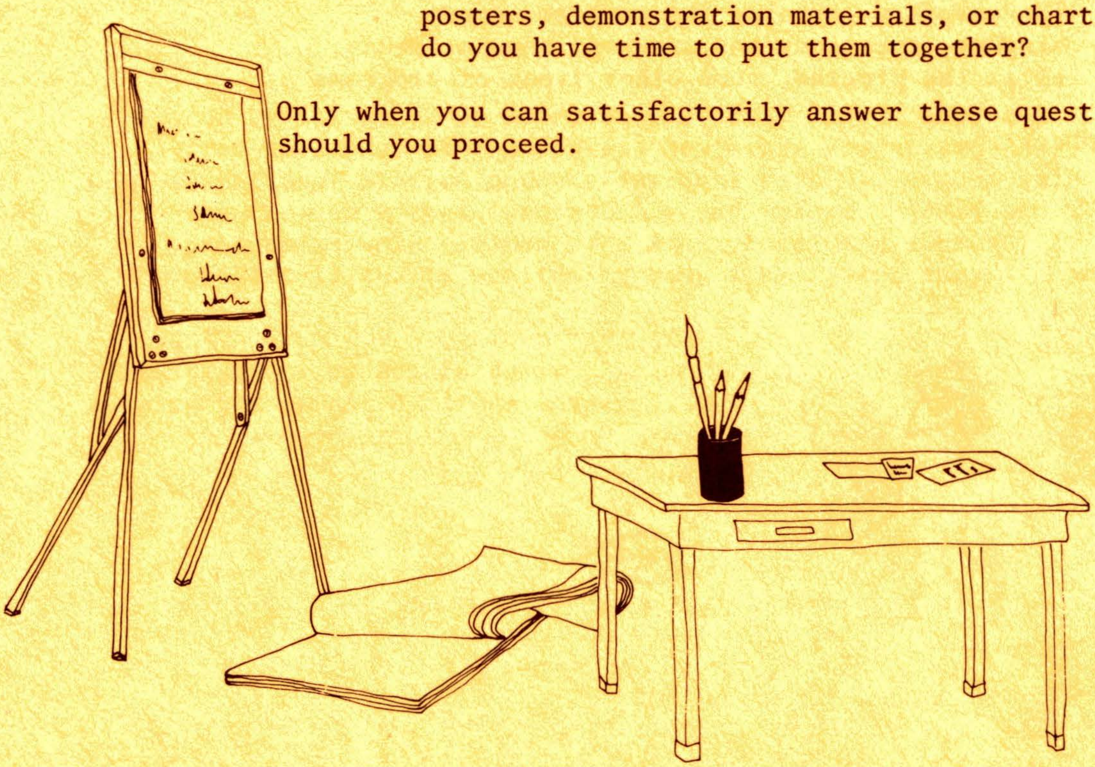
Before tackling a presentation, there are a few questions you should ask yourself:

1. What does the audience really want? If a local service club wants a program on a controversial proposal, will they be satisfied with a travelog of pretty pictures? If a science class requests a presentation on forestry serving our daily needs, will forest products handouts do an adequate job? If the District Ranger wants you to make a presentation at a staff meeting, will he be impressed with the impromptu graphics you make in front of the Forest Supervisor?

2. Can you provide it? Two key factors in providing what the audience wants are (1) do you have the background required for the presentation and, (2) if you have the background, do you have adequate time to prepare a first-class presentation?

3. Do you need visual aids? If you need slides, posters, demonstration materials, or charts, do you have time to put them together?

Only when you can satisfactorily answer these questions should you proceed.



ASSESS YOUR AUDIENCE

The type of audience you speak to will determine your subject as well as the type of presentation you use. If you are speaking to a junior high class, for instance, you wouldn't use terminology from your college textbook. In fact, you wouldn't use technical terms with any group other than a professional one. A small-sized group lends itself to an informal presentation--while a larger audience usually requires more formality, dictated perhaps by a P.A. system. Your dress might be important, too. You probably wouldn't wear a formal suit to a youth camp. On the other hand, you wouldn't wear blue jeans to a Chamber of Commerce luncheon either. The successful speaker is one who not only knows his subject but can read his audience as well.

People today see sophisticated films and TV presentations. Amateur programs simply cannot make it today. Understanding the listening audience is very important for a successful talk. Here are a few points to ponder:

1. Basically, people do not listen well. It takes energy and concentration. Since it is easier and quicker to "think" than to listen to the more slowly-spoken word, it is easy for the mind to run ahead, go off on tangents, or daydream. It is up to a good speaker to pull the listener's mind back to the subject matter--and keep it there.

2. You compete with distractions. Good preparation includes eliminating as many distractions as possible. Will the room be too hot? Will street noise enter through an open window? Is there a loudspeaker making announcements nearby? Are people talking in an outside hallway? Check these things out before you begin.

3. Since every group is made up of individuals with different backgrounds, you must find (or assume) the common bond that holds them together and relate to that bond if you want to hold their interest. In other words, you must use wording and terminology familiar to them and that they can relate to. If you introduce new material, you'll have to explain its background or you will lose your audience.

4. A group's interest span will vary. It is usually a good idea to limit a presentation to 15-20 minutes. Some educators will tell you that most people cannot concentrate on a given subject longer than 10 minutes, while highly-motivated groups will maintain their interest for 30 minutes or more. Many techniques can be used to bring an audience back and maintain their interest. We'll talk more about that later.

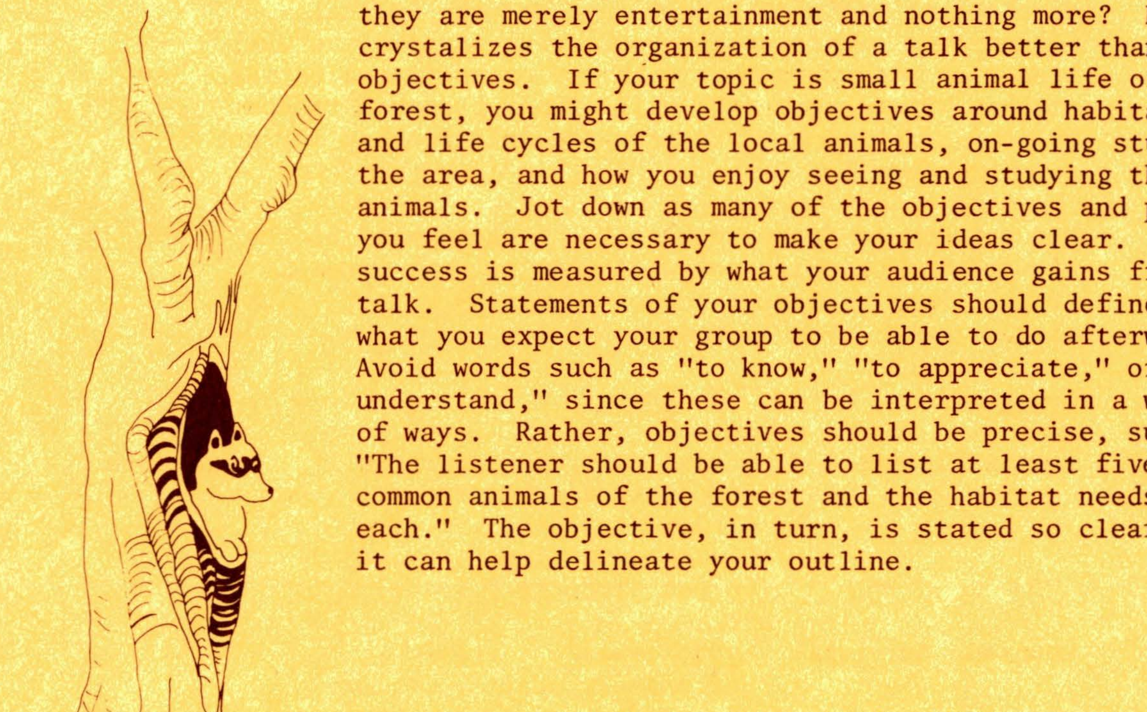
WHAT WILL YOU TALK ABOUT ?

In many cases, your subject will be selected for you either by the nature of your professional interests or by the request itself. In other cases, the selection of subject matter may be left entirely to you. Whenever a group requests a talk, be sure to find out as much as possible about their desires--what are they specifically interested in? If they request a talk on forest plants, you might ask if they are specifically interested in edible and useful plants, plant products, plant adaptations, how forest animals use plants, forest successional patterns or plant diseases. If they were actually looking for a presentation on edible and useful plants and you spoke on your specialty plant diseases, the group might be disappointed and you would probably feel you had never been able to "reach" them. If a group requested a talk on backpacking on your forest, hoping to learn about good camping spots and scenic areas they could use and, instead, got a program on the "how-to's" of backpacking, there obviously was a lack of communication on the exact subject matter.

Limiting your topic--Whether you select the topic yourself or the topic is part of the request, one of the commonest problems is limiting the scope and duration of the presentation. In the two previous examples, entire books have been written about forest plants and backpacking. So, which aspects will you talk about? Pick a segment with which you are familiar and comfortable. For instance, assume your specialty was Indian history of an area and you were asked to talk about forest plants. You would not talk about how plants transform sun energy to sugars. Rather, you would probably feel more comfortable talking about plant uses by the Indians, a subject about which you would be familiar and in which you already had a good background.

Be creative--Have you ever tried to take a fresh look at a familiar topic? Instead of talking about forest plants from the standpoint of man, try talking about them from the eye level and perspective of a small racoon who must build a nest and raise a family in the forest. Or compare our methods of backpacking with the mode of travel of the Indians who entered the high country to pick huckleberries every fall. Compare the utensils and food items between modern backpackers and Indians a few hundred years ago.

Have objectives--It is amazing how many presentations have no clear-cut objectives or goals. Should it be assumed they are merely entertainment and nothing more? Nothing crystalizes the organization of a talk better than stating objectives. If your topic is small animal life of the forest, you might develop objectives around habitat needs and life cycles of the local animals, on-going studies in the area, and how you enjoy seeing and studying these animals. Jot down as many of the objectives and points you feel are necessary to make your ideas clear. Your success is measured by what your audience gains from your talk. Statements of your objectives should define exactly what you expect your group to be able to do afterwards. Avoid words such as "to know," "to appreciate," or "to understand," since these can be interpreted in a wide range of ways. Rather, objectives should be precise, such as "The listener should be able to list at least five of the common animals of the forest and the habitat needs of each." The objective, in turn, is stated so clearly that it can help delineate your outline.



Now that you have your topic selected and have a general idea of your objectives and how you want to proceed, try writing a short summary--just a few sentences. For instance, say you want to talk about mountain-building, more specifically, about the mountains in your area. Your summary might read something like this:

> "Although mountains can be formed by a variety of processes, volcanic activity dominated the building process here. Born of fire and shaped by ice and snow, our mountains appear dormant now. However, the processes of heat and erosion are still taking place."

Everything in the talk would relate to these statements.

An outline will give your talk a planned structure of development and will result in a smooth, logical sequence of events within your talk. An outline will bind your story together with a plot and an objective--without these, your talk will simply become a random telling of a group of facts whose relationship may not even be clear.

Use a theme to frame your talk. A theme will be the viewpoint from which you will develop your general topic. Many different themes may be used to develop a single topic. For instance:

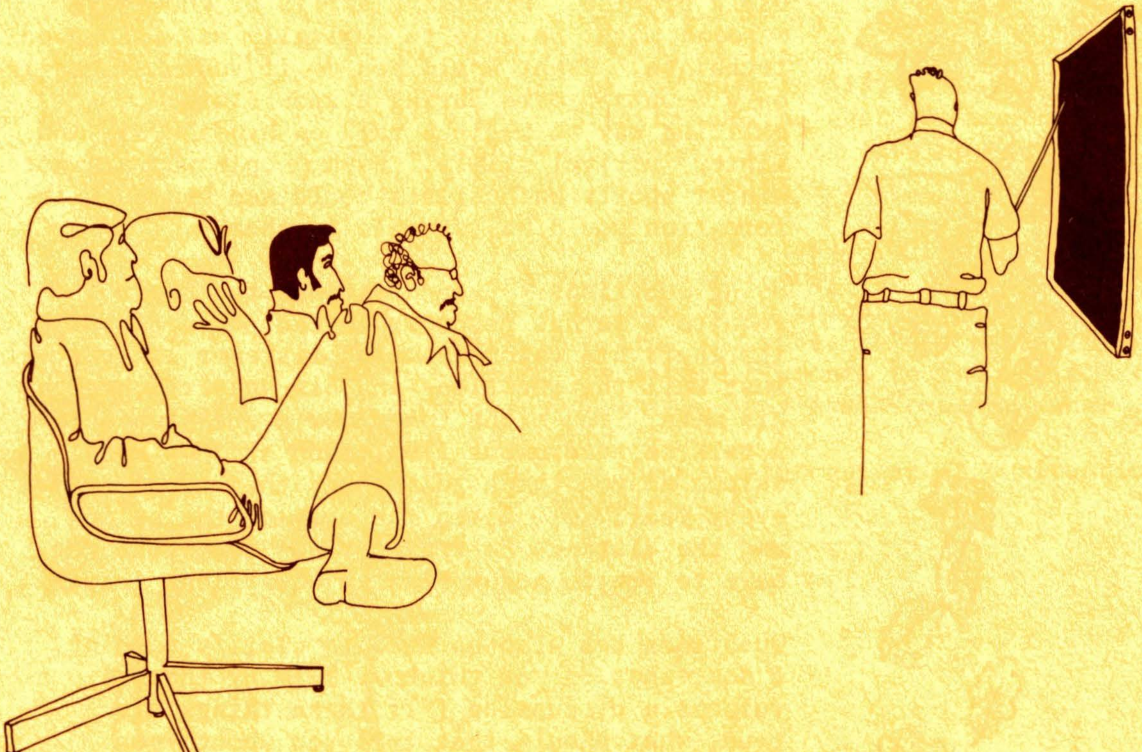
Topic	Theme
Forest Plants	Indian uses . . . or
	Successional patterns . . . or
	Plant diseases . . . or
	Plant adaptations . . . or
	Forest products . . . or . . .
Mountain Survival	Hypothermia . . . or
	How animals adapt . . . or
	How plants adapt . . . or
	Winter survival . . . or . . .

Basically, most talks fall into three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. Often, the introduction and conclusion can be planned after the body or main section of the talk is done.

The introduction--This is the beginning. The introduction must focus attention on the topic. The introduction should set the stage and attract the listener's attention. It is often said that if the introduction doesn't capture the attention of the audience, the rest of the talk won't either. Sometimes a personal story or an anecdote, a problem or a controversial question are good devices with which to begin. The main purpose of the introduction should be to attract attention and solicit interest.

The body--This is the main part of your talk, where you will expand your ideas and develop your topic. Throughout, you will need to utilize a variety of techniques to maintain your listener's interest. More on that in the next section.

The conclusion--The conclusion can be a brief review or summary. This is the finishing touch to your talk. Don't let your talk just fade away. It is your best chance to make a lasting impression. Don't waste the last moments of your talk. Make them count.



TECHNIQUES FOR INTEREST

During the main portion of your talk, you must be consciously aware of your audience's listening powers--or lack thereof. You can't expect the group to be so charmed by your every word that they are completely attentive during your entire presentation. You have to work at getting their attention--and work even harder to keep it. You must stimulate their desire to listen. There are a number of techniques you can use to keep your audience with you.

-- Use curiosity. Try opening your presentation by recalling a relationship that will enlist their curiosity. For instance, you may say, "Yesterday, when I was talking to the District Ranger, he said he can predict tomorrow's weather just by watching the clouds overhead." Now, the group will want to know if they can predict weather so simply, and will be anxious to hear what you tell them.

-- Use a promise. Promising skills or knowledge someone might be able to logically use is a good technique. "What would you do if your car stalled on a mountain pass during a snow storm?" is an enticing way to begin a talk on hypothermia and winter survival skills. Even people who are not winter sports enthusiasts could see how such information would be valuable to them.

-- Using questions. Even questions that do not require a verbal response on the part of your listeners are valuable. The listener at least must mull the question--and his answer--through his mind. You might interject a question into a talk on anadromous fish, such as "How many salmon do you think go through this fish ladder every year?" or "Given the size of the salmon and the distance he travels, how far would you have to run to accomplish an equivalent feat?"

Questions can also be used to clarify a point, ("Now, what do you think we mean by that?"), refocus a discussion ("If these things are true, what should that tell you about your backpacking methods in bear country?"), or require evaluations ("Now that we have looked at these three valleys, which do you think should be left in a natural state and which could best be utilized for a new ski resort?").

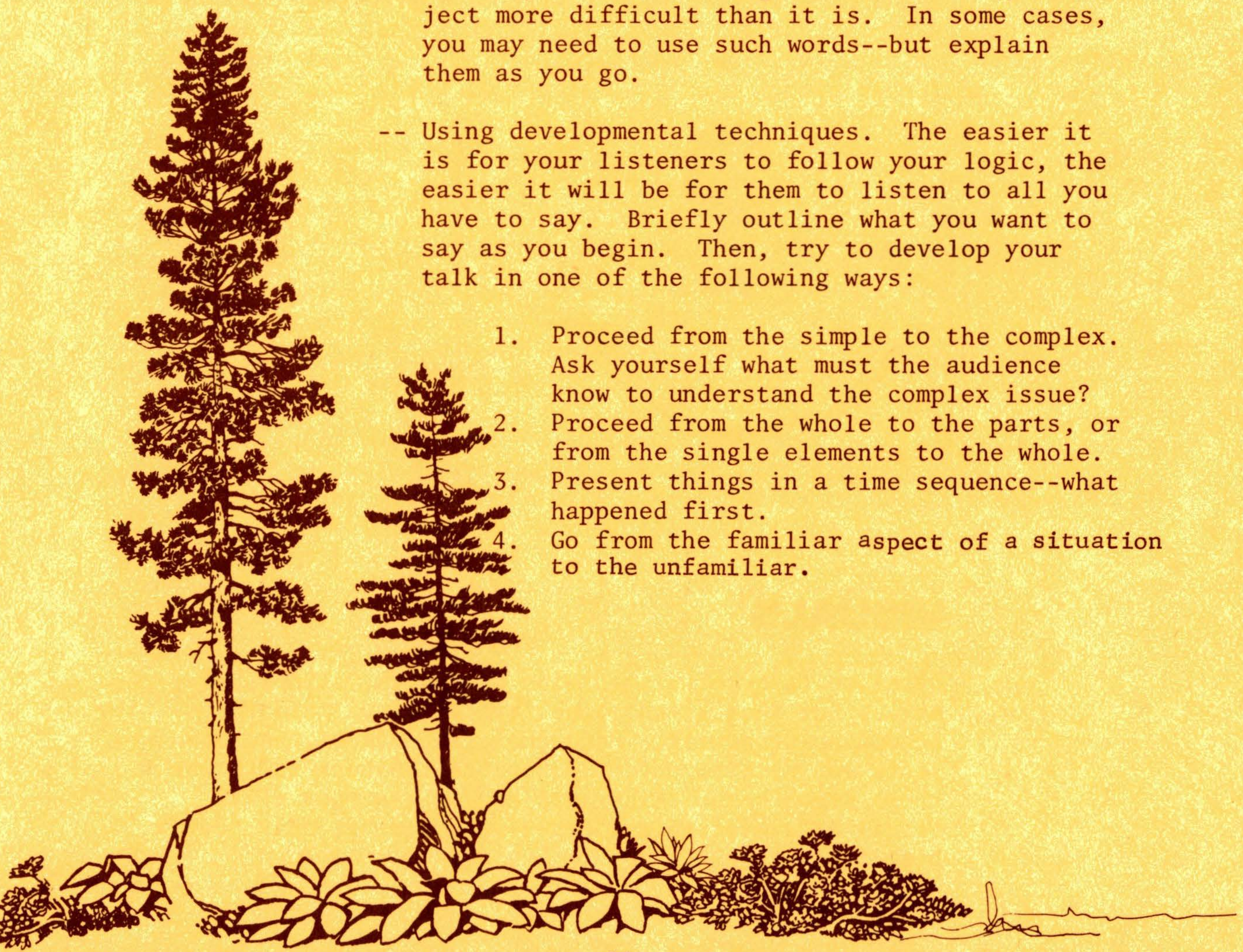
-- Using comparisons. To help your listeners understand a concept or idea they may not be familiar with, use comparisons they can understand. For instance, the concept of an ecological niche might be easier to understand if you relate it to a person's profession.

-- Using examples and anecdotes. Perhaps it is a throwback to our childhood days of listening to fairy tales. Everyone loves a story. Weaving stories into a talk changes the pace and is a most useful tool for adding interest.

-- Using simple words. Don't try to impress your group by using big words. Or use words that are familiar to you but not to people outside your profession. What is a "land use suitability"? How do you "scale" a log? Don't make any subject more difficult than it is. In some cases, you may need to use such words--but explain them as you go.

-- Using developmental techniques. The easier it is for your listeners to follow your logic, the easier it will be for them to listen to all you have to say. Briefly outline what you want to say as you begin. Then, try to develop your talk in one of the following ways:

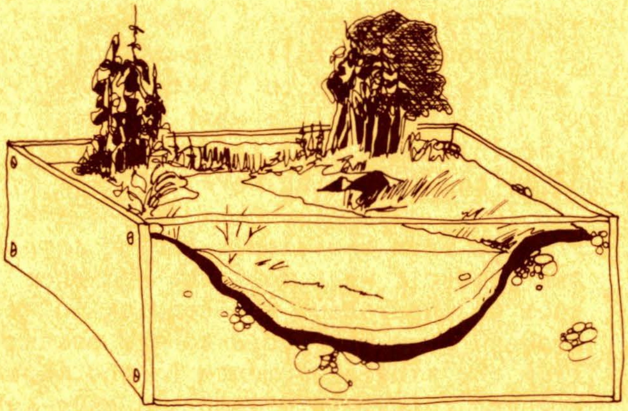
1. Proceed from the simple to the complex. Ask yourself what must the audience know to understand the complex issue?
2. Proceed from the whole to the parts, or from the single elements to the whole.
3. Present things in a time sequence--what happened first.
4. Go from the familiar aspect of a situation to the unfamiliar.



HOW ABOUT YOUR INITIAL IMPRESSION ?

A good talk can be broken with a poor first impression. Do you stand aloofly away from the group while it is gathering? Do your clothes look as if you had just returned from a mountain-climbing expedition? Did you forget to bring a remote cord for your slide projector? All of these things can make an impression more lasting than your first words. A bad impression made before your presentation even begins will be extremely difficult to undo.

It should not need to be said that your dress should be neat and appropriate to the occasion. But there is more to your appearance than dress. If you walk aimlessly to the speaker's area, fidget with the microphone or your visual aids, slouch against the wall or a table, what type of impression have you already made with your listeners?



VISUALS

Often we think of visual aids as charts, slides, or movies but that is only one type of visual aid for accompanying a talk. Panoramas, landscapes, and objects can also be used. Sometimes the best talks use these items because they are by far the most vivid visual aids available. Paper and film are only second best.

Landscapes as Visual Aids.

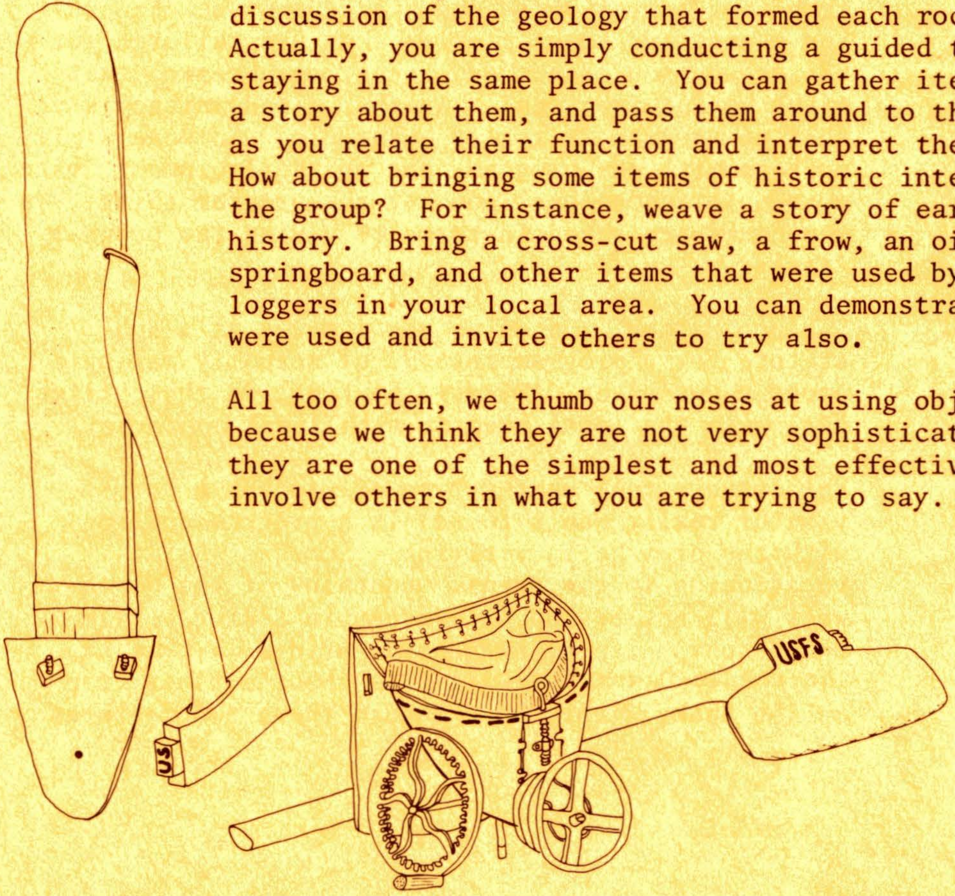
Viewpoints and Overlooks can be used for formal or informal presentations, to explain the geology and related land uses of the landscape before the group. Ridges, draws, mountain slopes, vegetation types, and other features become the illustrations. A small portable model (or one incorporated into a standing display) or even a telescope might be used as complimentary aids. A telescope is particularly useful because it allows forest visitors to get involved with the landscape and take a close, intimate look at it.

Objects as Visual Aids.

We can all remember having show and tell in school.

What better way to have someone relax, enjoy himself and be involved in the project than having a show and tell program? Since the visitor is probably only there for a short period of time, you, will undoubtedly have to provide most of the show and tell items. For instance, you might meet the group at the campfire circle in the middle of the day and pass out objects that are plant foods, edible items, tree and leaf samples for identification, or rock samples from various places in the vicinity, with an accompanying discussion of the geology that formed each rock. Actually, you are simply conducting a guided tour but staying in the same place. You can gather items, weave a story about them, and pass them around to the group as you relate their function and interpret their value. How about bringing some items of historic interest to the group? For instance, weave a story of early logging history. Bring a cross-cut saw, a frow, an oil can, a springboard, and other items that were used by the loggers in your local area. You can demonstrate how they were used and invite others to try also.

All too often, we thumb our noses at using objects because we think they are not very sophisticated; however, they are one of the simplest and most effective ways to involve others in what you are trying to say.



Movies, Slides, and Tapes as Visual Aids.

How often have we heard someone ask for a tape or a movie that they can use for a program? "Give me something quick", "I don't have time to prepare anything." Too often we rely on a "canned" program instead of preparing something ourselves. However, there are advantages and disadvantages to using automated programs. Let's take a quick look at some of these.

Advantages of Automation. The most obvious advantage, of course, is that the program is ready to go. You do not have to practice; once it is prepared, no additional work is needed. Equipment will do the rest. Oftentimes, it does not take much of our own time to prepare a short five- or ten-minute introduction to the "canned" program and then be available to answer questions afterwards.

Disadvantages of Automated Programs. One of the main disadvantages of automated programs is that they often require additional equipment, for instance, a tape recorder as well as a slide projector. This extra equipment may be difficult to cart around. Another disadvantage is that the program cannot be tailored for each individual group. Once the soundtrack and narration is done, it cannot be changed. You cannot add short stories that are tailored for the group, you cannot add recent occurrences that might be informational. Another disadvantage is that no program is really automatic. Someone still must go with the program, set up the equipment, make up the introductions, and set the program going. No man-hours are saved in terms of giving the program itself.

Subject Matter. Often we use a movie as a substitute for a program instead of actually making a program ourselves. Rarely, however, do these films deal with the local area or with local concerns.

Yet surveys tell us the type of program a forest visitor really wants to see is a program dealing with the area he is visiting. Someone who is vacationing in the scenic mountains of the Northwest will not be too interested in seeing a film on the cave life of Blanchard Springs Caverns in the scenic Ozarks or in a film about a float trip on the Snake River, even though these two features are worthwile in themselves. Likewise, someone who has just completed a raft trip through the rugged Hells Canyon be more interested in a program on the life of the Canyon, not one on the buffalo of the Great Plains. Too often, it is hard to find a program that is actually tailored for a given area. This has to be done by personnel on the ground, and there is no substitute for it. However, some prepared programs can certainly be used to add variety to the overall program schedule. For instance, in a campground it might be difficult for a single person to develop a wide variety of programs. However, one or two slide programs about the local area might be prepared and used with films or slide-tapes to fill out the entire schedule; thus, the general, automated programs and the locally-prepared programs combine to make a well-rounded summer schedule.

Sources. The next logical question is where can you get movies, slides, or filmstrips about your area? Chances are, you won't be able to find anything that specific; however, you may find things that can easily be tailored. For instance, a film on what to do when someone gets lost might apply just as well in one part of the country as it will in another. The life of some specific animals, for instance, the river otter which is common in many areas, might be useful. Below is a list of organizations you might contact. Don't forget local sources, though. Try the State Wildlife Department, County library, and your State universities. Often these have film loaning services, and are happy to loan films to suit a variety of needs. Don't forget to check your own Regional film library for Forest Service films.

Alaska Wildlife Films & Slides
Cecil Rhole
Moose Pass, Alaska 99631

Association Sterling Films
866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Eastman Kodak Company
Photo Information, Dept. 841
343 State Street
Rochester,NY 14650

National Audubon Society
Photo and Film Department
950 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Modern Talking Picture Service
2323 New Hyde Park Road
New Hyde Park, NY 11040

The American Museum of Natural History
Central Park W. at 79th Street
New York, NY 10024

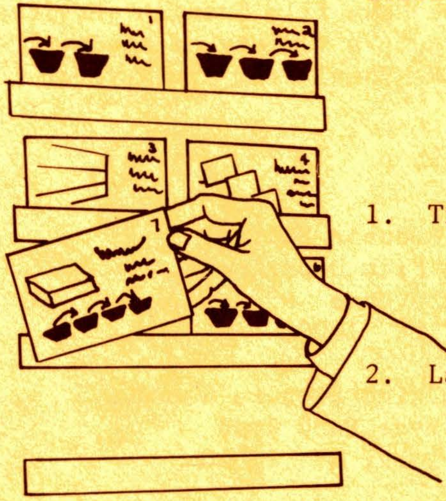
Slide Talks.

The slide talk is one of our most common forms of presentation. Too often, however, we think of a slide talk as being so easy that all we have to do is throw some slides into a slide drum and take off, with little thought to the organization and presentation. Let's look at a few simple steps to make a successful talk.

Organize. Needless to say, the slide talk is simply an ordinary talk illustrated by slides, so the steps we have already discussed dealing with giving a talk apply here also. First, make an outline. Make sure it has an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. Only after your outline is completed and your story ideas are firm do you consider the slides that will illustrate the talk. Once the outline is done, you should find a means to correlate what you are going to say with the visuals that you are going to use. There are several ways to do this.

Try using a 3x5 index card to relate the narration you want with a sketch or drawing of the visual that will illustrate that portion of the narration.

When your script is typed, separate the narration (audio) from the visual ideas (slides) as shown below.

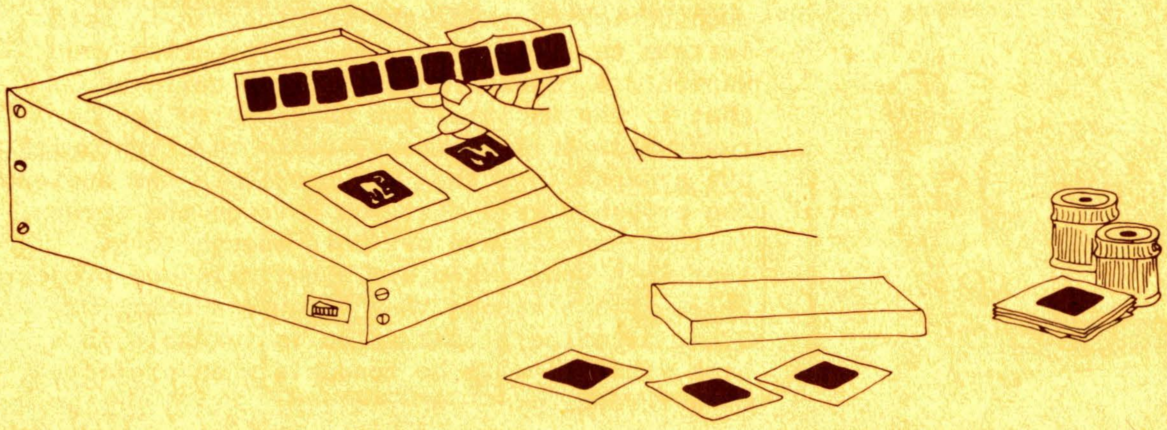


THE NATIONAL FORESTS OF THE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Visual	Narration
1. Title slide--Scenic	Our National Forests--the term evokes many feelings in different people. How about you?
2. Lake in the Wallowa Mountains	Does it bring back memories of a fun pack trip, maybe to a small lake hidden in the distant Wallowas?
3. Trout--in pan over campfire	And of those freshly caught trout, ready to pan-fry over an open fire?
4. Forest view	Does it bring about a vision of trees, stretching to the horizon?
etc.	etc.

Much has been said on using the proper number of slides for a given length of talk. The main thing to consider is that each slide should illustrate only one point, and it should illustrate that point adequately. You do not want to have so many slides that they pass by the viewer's eyes before he has a chance to absorb the information on them. Neither do you want to have so few slides that the observer becomes bored with one before you go on to the next. Slides should illustrate all the points you wish to make, no more and no less. From a practical consideration, it is often a good idea to limit the number of your slides to the number of spaces you have in your slide drum. This will depend largely on the type of projector you are using since there is a wide variety from one brand to the other in terms of how many slides can be accommodated.

It is much easier to gather your slides if there is a good file system of slides in your office. Often, however, this is not the case and you will need to go out and actively photograph the illustrations you want to use. Correlate the slides to your narration. This is best done on a light table or other type of viewing apparatus. The slides can be laid out one by one and you can see how they relate to each other. You do not want to have dark slides nor slides that are too light next to each other. You can move the slides and adjust them simply by moving them on your light table. It is also helpful in using the light table to get a mental picture of the slides as they will be viewed by your audience. You can make a mental outline of the slides that you will be using and this will help you in your presentation itself.



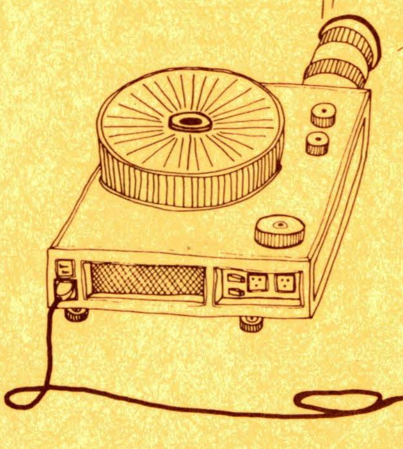
Practice. There is no substitute for practice. Once you have your outline and story line firm and your slides selected, take time to practice. The results in your talk will be well worth the extra effort.

Quality of the Slides. Nothing replaces quality. This goes not only for your narration but also for your visuals. However, it is your visuals that the audience will be most likely to remember if they are poor. Make sure that each slide has good composition and that it illustrates exactly what you want it to. If there is a portion of your slide that has been mounted improperly or that shows irrelevant material, try masking the slide so that only the part you really want shows. Make sure each slide is sharp and in focus. If you cannot get a slide to illustrate your point, do one of two things. Either modify your talk (even if on a temporary basis) to eliminate that particular point or modify your talk to make a point that you can illustrate. Do not use a fill-in slide or simply talk with no relevant slide at all.

Effective Graphics. Good graphics can amplify and clarify your message. They can stimulate interest and help keep you on the track. They merit the same care and preparation as the commentary and the scenic photos. Slides that cannot be read when they are projected lessen their impact. The primary consideration in such graphics is legibility.

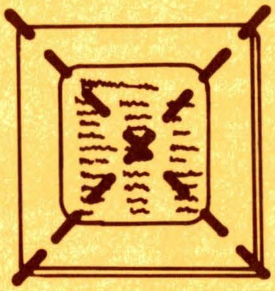
- There are many ways to make effective illustrations.

  How many times have you seen a projected slide which simply copied material from a book? The letters were too small, the background was not sharp, there may have been a curl in the corner of the book that made the slide extremely difficult to read. No thought or imagination exuded from this slide. How much better to re-do the information in bold letters to include only the information you wanted! A general rule of thumb tells us that if the material you have copied can be read while holding the slide to the light without a magnifier, then the people in the audience can probably read what you have on the screen. If the graphics are not bold enough to be seen with your naked eye, they will not project well. Don't assume that because a chart or other detailed illustration is readable in a book, that it will be readable when projected on a screen.



-- Use a template. Take a piece of stiff paper and cut a window in it. The window should have a ratio of 2 to 3 either vertically or horizontally. This is the ratio that you will commonly find in 35mm slides. All your graphics then should fit within an area with a ratio of 2 to 3. Thus, you will have the proper framing for good copying. Then keep all of your captions, lines, or other markings within the window of the rectangle you have cut out.

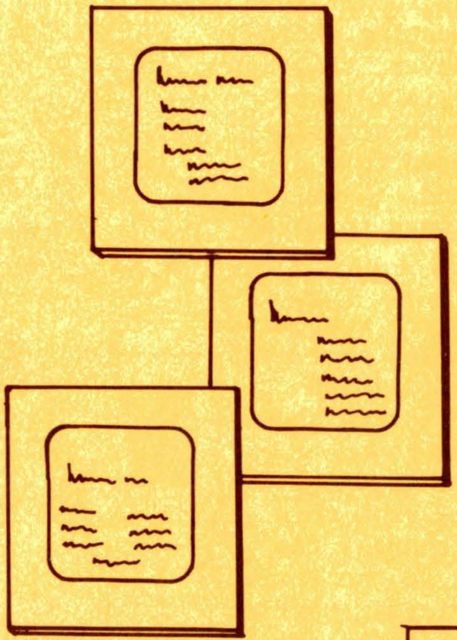
-- A few points to observe.



Color film is also convenient for making slides from black and white copy. Use a colored background; it is much easier to read than black printing on a white background.

Limit each slide to only one main idea. Use several simple slides rather than one complicated one, especially if you want to discuss a particular point at length.

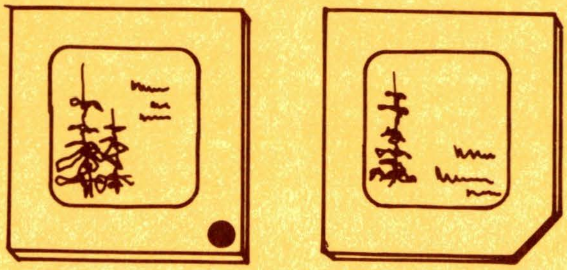
Limit each slide to about 15 or 20 words.



Use a slide series for progressive disclosure. It clarifies greatly and allows you to outline your presentation as you go.

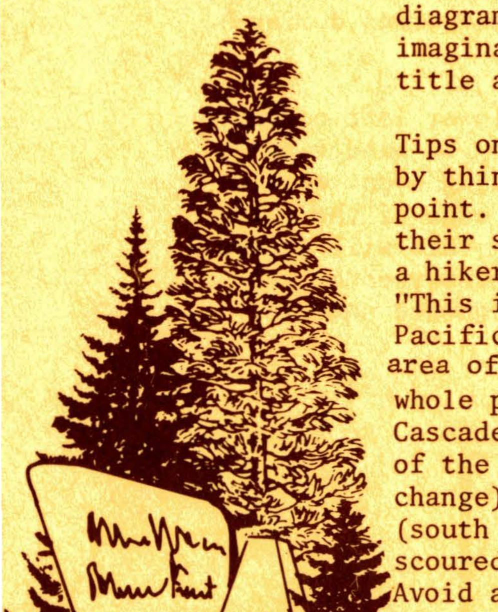
Use duplicates if you need to refer to the same slide at several different times during your talk.

Mark all your slides in the lower left corner when the slide reads correctly on hand viewing. This can be done by making a dot with a magic marker, by cutting the edge of the slide, or a variety of other means. This will assure that the slides are properly inserted in your slide drum. Then add your sequence numbers.

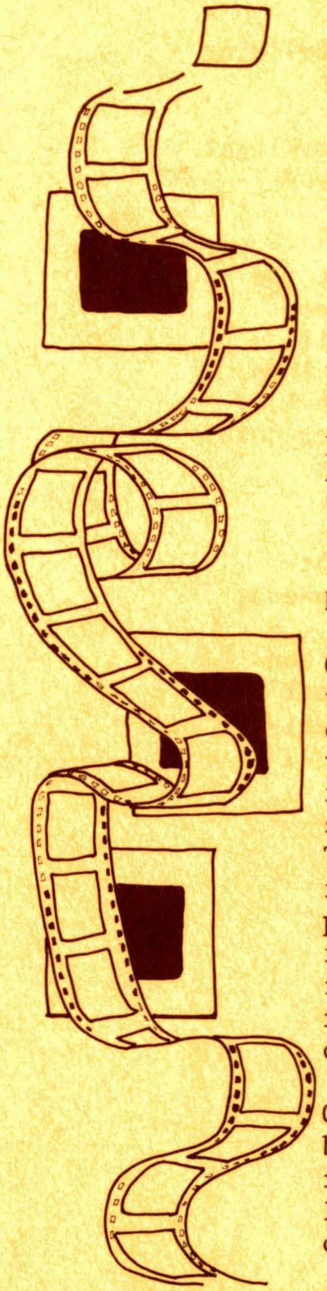


Titles and Endings. A title and an ending slide make the talk begin with a professional touch. The ending slide stops the talk instead of simply letting it fade away. There are simple ways to make titles and endings, and the extra effort is worth the results. For instance, a program on the varied resources of the Rolling Mountain National Forest could easily begin with a Forest entry sign. This can be done with nearly any area-type of talk. Another simple way to make titles is with small plastic letters (available in most stationery stores and art supply stores) on colored paper, for instance poster board, and then simply photographing them (make sure your background has a non-glare surface). This can also be done with a background photograph if you have a print large enough. If your camera will double expose, you can lay out white letters on a black background and photograph them; then cocking the camera but not advancing the film, take a photograph of the background you wish to use. It may take some experimentation to get the proper exposures, but nonetheless this is a simple way of putting letters on a background. Most photo studios will also do this for you. You can have the lettering done on white paper and submit your background slides with a sketch indicating where you want the letters to appear. However, this can be quite costly. Another simple way is to use paper cutouts. This does not take much artistic ability and the cutouts can be arranged into a diagram or sketch which is then copied. Your imagination can think of many other ways to make title and ending slides.

Tips on Speaking with Slides. Introduce each slide by thinking ahead to your next slide and your next point. Make a mental image of the slides and their sequence. For example, if the screen shows a hiker along an alpine ridge, you may say, "This is the Timberline Trail, a part of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. From this area of scenic Mt. Hood (press slide change) the whole panorama of the (Mt. Jefferson on the screen) Cascades lies before you. This particular portion of the trail crosses a gradual slope (press slide change) that was smoothed when a giant mud flow (south slope of Mt. Hood comes on the screen) scoured the southern slopes of the mountain." Avoid advancing to a new slide before you are



actually ready for it. If you change too soon, the listener will examine the new slide and lose your train of thought while being confused about the meaning of the slide.



Avoid reference to the slide that is on the screen. Remember, the talk should stand alone. The slide only illustrates what you are saying. A poor example might be as follows: (Bear on screen) "Here we have the bear which is common to this area." One should say, "The black bear is common here." With the proper slide showing, there is no need to refer to it. This implies that the listener is ignorant or cannot recognize the common bear. If it is necessary to point out the object of your discussion because it is too far away or covered by something else, or because of poor lighting, the slide is not doing its job and should be replaced or removed entirely.

Do not apologize for poor slides. If it is all you have, use it and vow to get a better one as soon as you can. Otherwise, leave it out and skip the point entirely, adding it when you have the material. Apologies are a waste of time; they sidetrack the listener and they call attention to the poor quality, reflecting adversely on you as being unprepared.

How to Copy Material.

Choice of camera. The 35mm single lens reflex has the obvious advantages of being able to see, in most cases, just what you will get on film. However, there are some models that are not quite precise in this regard (meaning that what you get on the slide may not be exactly what you see in viewfinder). To compensate for this, become acquainted with the inherent characteristics associated with your particular camera. In any case, it is always a good idea not to try and crop too precisely in the viewfinder because the slide mount your lab uses may crop into the actual picture area, cutting the edges off corners from letters or other subject material.

Choice of lens. The ideal is a macro design with built-in closeup focusing capability and flatness of field to insure corner-to-corner sharpness. Such lenses provide great versatility and are also excellent for general purpose photography.

Another answer might be the auxiliary closeup lenses, which fit like a filter in front of regular lenses, and work very well.

Or--many SLR lenses focus close enough anyway for satisfactory copying.

The copy stand. Get as good a one as you can afford. It should be rigid and all controls should lock tight and stay put.

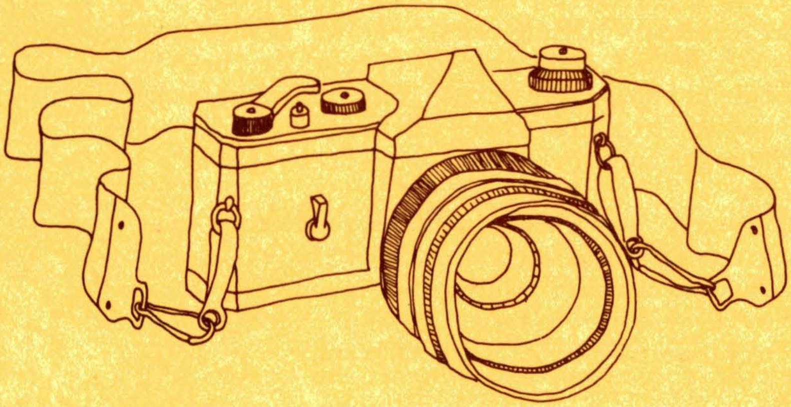
Lighting. Almost any photofloods will do, providing they are matched pairs.

Electronic flash also works very well (with daylight film, of course) but careful computation for exposure is necessary.

Choice of film. If you are in a hurry to get the results back, as usually we are, use High Speed Extachrome Type B film for artificial light illumination, exposed at Eastman's recommended index (125ASA). A slower film, Kodachrome II, Type A, film for photolamps (40ASA) usually has better color balance but is not so easily processed and is usually sent to Eastman for developing.

If copy has lots of white matter, use a slight correction filter to eliminate excessive blueness.

You can also use daylight film with a proper conversion filter for artificial light, or without filter for natural light or electronic-flash illumination.



CAMPFIRE PROGRAMS

The organization and planning that goes into any scheduled talk, whether it is held inside or outdoors, is just one element of preparing for a campfire program. We are concerned here with the broader overall presentation of the program from the time the first visitor arrives until the last one leaves at the conclusion of the program.

There is a great difference between having desirable informality and an apparent lack of organization. Unplanned programs become hectic and unwieldy for the leader and very confusing to the listeners. To run a smooth program, you have to do a lot of advanced thinking about what you want the program to contain and how you will conduct it. Every part of the program should contribute something to the whole. For instance, have you thought about some of these things?

Is something needed to fill the time for those who arrive early?

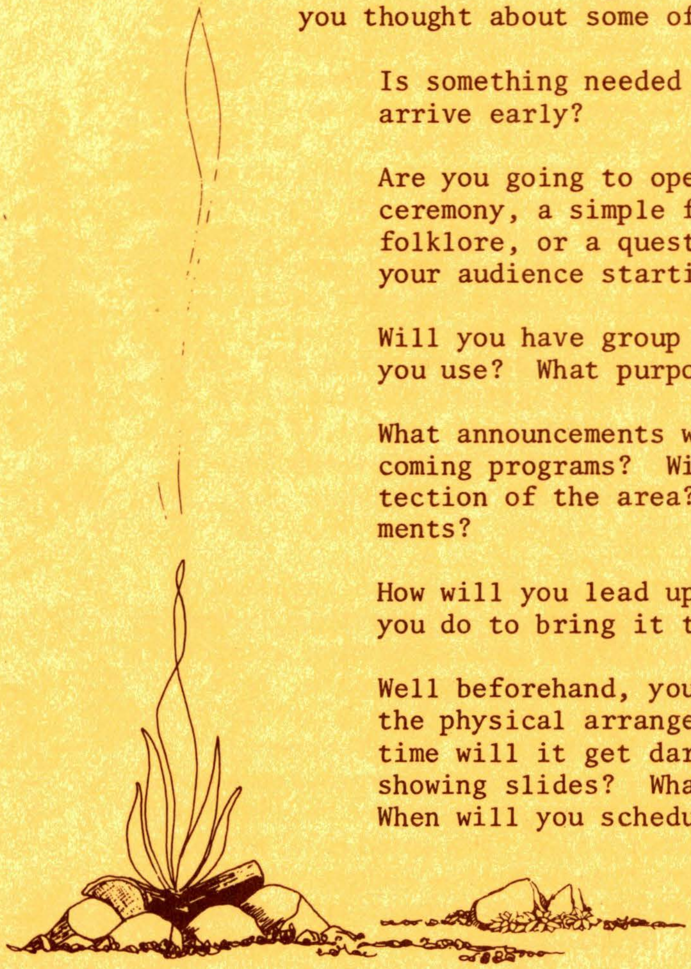
Are you going to open with a fire-lighting ceremony, a simple friendly greeting, some local folklore, or a question and answer period to get your audience starting to think about your subject?

Will you have group singing? If so, what songs will you use? What purpose will they serve?

What announcements will you use? Will you announce coming programs? Will you relate safety and protection of the area? When will you make announcements?

How will you lead up to the main event? What will you do to bring it to an effective close?

Well beforehand, you must think of the timing and the physical arrangements for your program. What time will it get dark? What time can you start showing slides? What will you do until then? When will you schedule your program to start?



The Campfire.

Some naturalists prefer to have a campfire going well before the program begins. The sight of the fire will attract many campers and passers-by who may have been unaware of the program. Other naturalists like to use the lighting of the fire as a ceremony or actually make the lighting of the fire a part of their talk. For instance, a discussion about the role of fire and man could be done while the fire is being lit. The naturalist could relate how fires must be used for cooking and heating. Another tactic would be to talk about firefighting and fire prevention as the fire is being lit, demonstrating at this time some fire tools.

At least one person should be present in the campfire area well before the program begins. He might visit campsites inviting visitors to the program and as they arrive in the area, engage them in conversation to attempt to promote a warm, personal, friendly atmosphere.

Opening the Program.

The program should begin on time, and you should have a planned method for starting. For instance, you might welcome the group and identify the agency you work for (but keep it from becoming a commercial). During the opening of the program, you might try to stir up some interest in your subject perhaps by telling a brief story or relating a recent event. For instance, you might inquire whether someone had been up to Switch Creek Falls and then relate some of the local geology. This is particularly useful if geology is the topic of your program. You might try relating some of the place names in the area, explaining whether they were Indian names, or whether various places were named for early pioneers. Then give a brief historical discussion of the area. This would be especially useful if the main body of your talk dealt with a historical subject.

Group Singing.

Group singing is a great way to establish informality and a comradery with your group. If possible, someone with a guitar might be talked into strumming along with the group. If you have a good singing voice, that helps, but it is not essential. Your main job is to get the song started, keep it on pitch, and to keep it moving. The campfire is no place to try to teach a group new songs, especially ones that may be difficult. Old favorites or variations of them usually are the best. People enjoy what they can do well. Rounds, especially some that involve some action, or competition between the groups are good. Simple stunts for participation with some songs can also be done, especially if they go with well-known tunes.

Group singing can be overdone. Not everyone in the audience will want to participate. Some may be embarrassed to do so, and they will silently sit there hoping that the singing is done soon. Group singing should not exceed 10 or 15 minutes of your program.

Questions and Answers.

It takes a great deal of skill and knowledge to handle a question and answer session. It cannot be done simply by asking the group, "Do you have any questions?" You have to know about the area and the types of questions that will most likely be asked. Sometimes you can start a question session by relating a recent experience, for instance, something you have seen while hiking in the area. You might relate some of the plants and the animals that you saw on a hike up Old Baldy, then ask the audience whether any of them have made a similar hike and what they saw. This is usually effective in getting questions from the group as a whole. If you plan to use a question and answer period, you must be prepared to handle controversial subjects and, thus, you must have a thorough knowledge of the resources in your area and the management policies of your agency. If a question appears to lead to a heated discussion, you might simply invite those people involved to stay after the program to carry on the topic.

Announcements.

Announcements can be an important part of your program. They can be done at the beginning, or toward the end, or you might work them into the main body of your talk. For example, you might have some slides that illustrate a nature walk on the following day. Or you might have some slides illustrating some of the safety precautions one should take while climbing a nearby peak. These then could be used at the beginning of your actual slide presentation. Slides of places visited or of people doing things give a graphic description of your announcements. However, you should avoid a long listing of things to do or programs to attend. Most people will only remember two or three items at a time. It is usually best not to leave your announcements until last. By the end of your program, most of your audience will be anxious to get back to their campsite.

After the Program.

Most programs should be ended with an invitation to continue discussions or questions after the program. The majority of the audience will choose to leave and you can devote your attention to those who remain. Often you can talk to various members of the group while you are putting the equipment away. Beware, however, of the argumentative type of person who may simply have a beef and want to stay on and on...and on. You will have to politely excuse yourself in these cases.

Some Other Types of Programs.

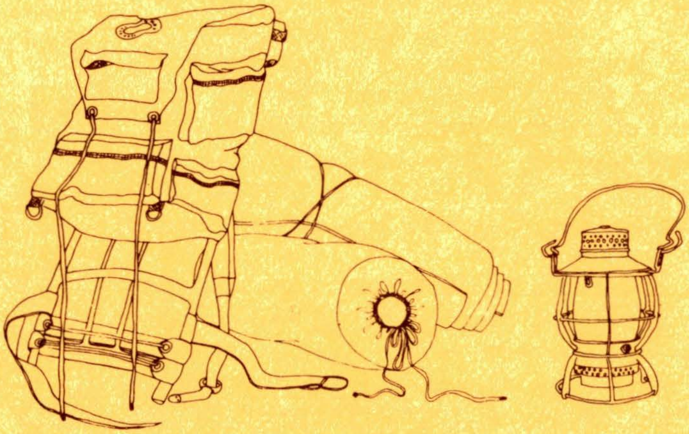
Prepared slide talks and films have been one of our most reliable methods of conducting campfire programs and will probably continue to be the most popular. They are versatile, they are relatively easy to prepare and set up, and they are are well accepted by most of our forest visitors. We have already discussed both of these types of programs at some length, and so we will concentrate on some of the other types of programs that can be considered for a campfire presentation.

Sky interpretation. If the campfire area has a good view of the sky, or is a short distance from an open area with a good view, a star talk might be considered. This can be done either as an activity after a slide talk or film, in which case it would be limited to about 15 minutes and announced in advance, or it can provide the main part of the program. This is especially useful in areas where electricity is not available and, therefore, audio-visual equipment cannot be used. The same things apply for this type of talk as in any other in terms of the pre-program activities; however, you may want to eliminate the campfire as the light would compete with your activity. The equipment for a star-gazing session can be relatively simple, the most important item being a very strong flashlight that can be used as a pointer. The leader of the group does not have to be an expert. Successful programs can be woven around 10 or 12 star constellations. The leader can relate Greek mythology or Indian lore and other information to help the visitor gain an appreciation of his place in history and the universe. If possible, a telescope might also be used, and individuals can then look at the stars close up.

Flashlight Hikes and Evening Explorations. There can be many variations of this activity, which can be done at night or at dusk. In essence, the naturalist leads the group in exploring what may be a familiar daytime scene--a marsh, meadow, forest trail, lake margin--to see and feel the transition to nighttime activity in that habitat. This is especially useful with small groups.

Demonstrations. Demonstrations are becoming increasingly popular. These can be done in a variety of ways. For instance, demonstrations may include activities that pioneers in the area utilized--splitting shakes, the use of black powder, pioneer crafts. Demonstrations might also take the form of a recreation activity. This is exceedingly popular in places where hiking, backpacking, and fishing predominate. The demonstration can highlight the ethics of each type of recreation, demonstrate the proper use of equipment, and provide the visitor with a better background and understanding of his chosen activity. A backpacking sequence might even include a short slide program showing the proper way of finding a campsite and the types of areas that will handle the camping pressure better than others. Another idea concerns a survival activity or resource activity, for instance, firefighting. Tools can be demonstrated, showing how fire is fought in that area.

All of these demonstrations could be used--and sometimes are--as a part of a slide program or film program. In this case, they would be short sequences that would precede the main talk or feature for the evening.



FEEDBACK

No matter what type of activity you are engaged in, you should attempt to get some feedback. This is the only way to learn from what you are doing. The best time to think about feedback is immediately after an activity. How did you feel about it? Did it go smoothly? Did you feel awkward? Were there times when you wished you had more material to present or that you had too much material? Were there parts of it that you did not feel really reached the audience? Were there parts that you felt the audience generally appreciated more than other parts? To improve your techniques, you need to use feedback.

Audience. You can observe the facial expressions and the eye contact of the people who are listening. Are they attentive? Are they shifting in their seats? Are they gazing off in the other direction? These are all keys to tell you whether you are reaching them or not. You can also get feedback from the audience by the questions they ask afterwards. Generating interest is one of your prime goals.

Colleagues. Ask those who work with you to attend some of your programs. Ask them for helpful hints. Do you have any mannerisms they find distracting?

Tape recorders. Take a tape recorder with you to one of your programs. You might have a friend turn it on for you so the beginning of your program won't be interrupted. Listening to the tape afterwards will tell you a great deal about your presentation.

Checklists and Critiques. You can prepare one yourself or use the sample found on the next page. Check yourself off and rate yourself after the program. Ask a colleague to do likewise and compare your lists.

TALKS - APPRAISAL CHART

The purpose of this chart is to encourage you to review your talk; be your own critic to detect rough spots that need to be polished. (Chart is adapted from one developed by National Park Service.)

Yes	No	
		Preparation
☐	☐	Do you schedule your time so you can prepare and practice?
☐	☐	Do you organize your talk so the important points are orderly and concise?
☐	☐	Do you vary the outline of your talk with new concepts and new illustrations occasionally?
☐	☐	Do you sometimes find yourself using too much technical language?
☐	☐	Do you memorize your talk?(Usually not a good idea!)
☐	☐	Do you have a planned beginning and a planned end to your talk, even when it is brief and informal?
		Delivery
☐	☐	Do you use a friendly, conversational tone?
☐	☐	Do you speak loud enough to be heard? How do you check this?
☐	☐	Do you talk with enthusiasm?
☐	☐	What words do you slur? (Do you run sentences together with "and ah" or "ah" instead of having clean breaks between sentences?)
☐	☐	Do you pause to emphasize important points?
☐	☐	Do you open your mouth and use your tongue and lips to speak distinctly?
☐	☐	How is your eye contact--one or two people or do you cover the whole group?
☐	☐	Do you vary the rate of talking as a means of maintaining interest and stressing important ideas?
☐	☐	Do you modulate your voice to avoid a monotonous tone?
☐	☐	Are you over-serious in your talk?
☐	☐	Do you use objects, exhibits, etc. in your talks? If so, how effectively do you use them?
☐	☐	Do you use a tape recorder or other mechanical device periodically to check on your rate of speech, enunciation, modulation, etc.?
☐	☐	Do you invite someone (fellow employee, spouse, friend) to give you candid criticism?
		Attitude
☐	☐	Do you enjoy speaking to people?
☐	☐	Do you enjoy talking about the features of your area?
☐	☐	Are you more interested in the subject matter or the audience?

INVOLVE YOUR VISITOR

Ideas from Around the Forests

Try songs with motion--clap, stand up, sit down, touch toes, each verse gets louder or softer, or slowly eliminate words from each verse. This requires moving, thinking, and participation on the part of the visitor.

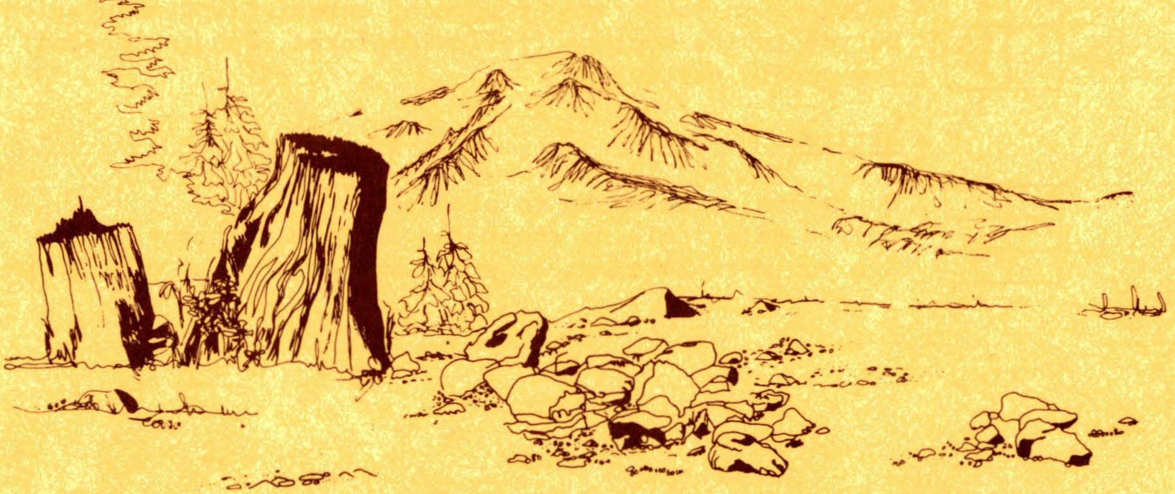
Ask visitors where they are from and find out what is environmentally similar or different between their home area and the spot they are now visiting. An award (a matching set of pine cones, an unusual rock, a Smokey the Bear button) can be given to the person from the longest distance.

Bring to the evening program some popcorn which can be shared with the other participants. Put out the word ahead and people can pop corn on the campfire before the program starts. (You could note on your posters "Popcorn cooking night" or "Marshmallow roasting night.") It builds a feeling of participation among the visitors.

At the beginning of a program, after introducing yourself and welcoming everyone, tell them to lose their inhibitions by joining in a contest. At the count of three, everyone is to shout their city or town of residence. Whichever city you can hear most loudly and clearly wins.

Or have them shout out their own first names and then tell them you would like to meet everyone of them after the program is over.

If an evening program is about fire, have the visitors suggest what a fire fighter might take in his personal pack if he expects to be out for three days. Let a volunteer carry a prepacked pack on his back for a while and then have him show what the pack contains--change of clothes, food, first-aid supplies, toilet paper (it always gets a good laugh), etc. Let a volunteer wear a Forest Service fire-proof shirt and you demonstrate that it is fire proof. Have fire fighting tools--shovel, polaski, etc. Demonstrate their use and explain when, where, and why they are used and let the visitors try them. Let a visitor put on a water backpack and have him try to put out your evening campfire with the handpump!



If an evening program is on logging, have a stump and various tools that are used to fell a tree: cross-cut saw, axe, powersaw. Demonstrate their use and explain the advantages and disadvantages of each. It is fun to let two volunteers use the cross-cut saw which requires real teamwork on coordinating the back and forth motion.

A most effective involvement idea is the marshmallow roast immediately following the main program. This enabled the naturalist to meet many of the children and, consequently, talk with many of the parents, too. It also creates a more relaxed, friendlier atmosphere.

Try a general discussion with the audience to get them responding--ask them what they liked about the area and what they didn't, how long they had been coming there, what they thought of the sewer project, the new construction, or whatever other activity might be occurring in the area.

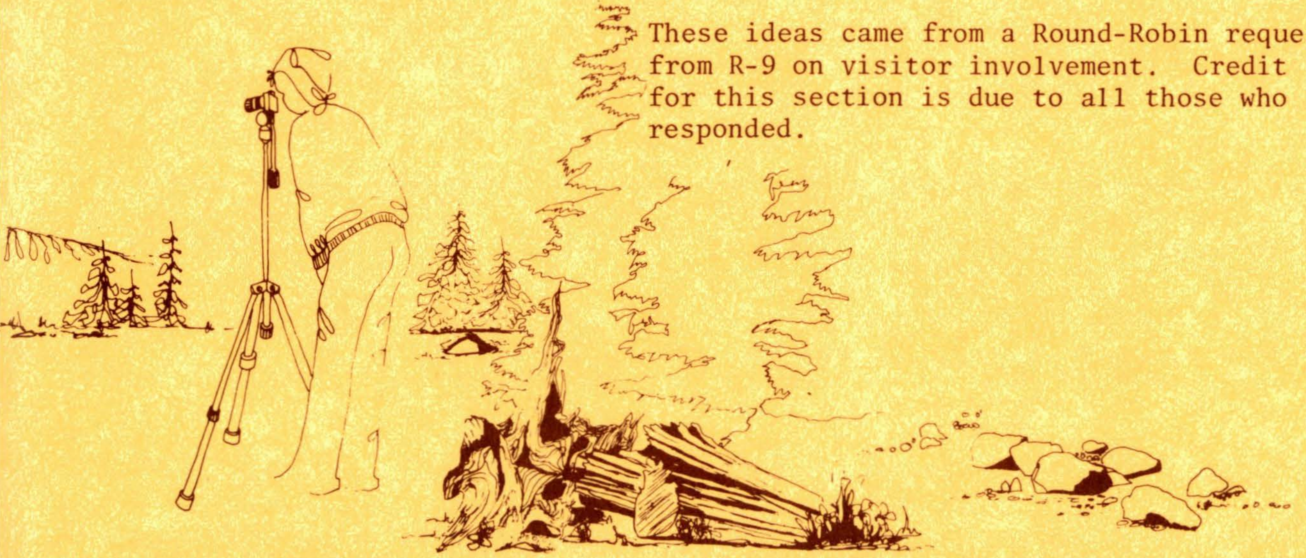
If camping, backpacking, or bicycling is popular in your area, have demonstration packs made up: One contains everything, the other has only essentials and lightweight equipment (stress leaving cans and bottles at home, use freeze-dried foods or store-bought food in plastic bags). Let the visitors try on the two packs for comparison.

If your evening program is about weather, its effect on vegetation growth and level of fire danger, have Forest Service weather instruments. Explain what the various instruments are used for and then let volunteers take readings under assimilated weather and vegetation conditions.

Sounds in the Night was tried with good results. This program, designed to get the visitor to listen to forest noises, allowed them to guess recorded sound. Sounds such as cougar, bobcat, wolf, woodpeckers, owls, frogs, and insects, were all tried and then followed by a slide on the screen of the animal or bird that made the sound. This gave good audience participation and helped enforce their listening experience by seeing the object.

Use historical objects of the local area that you bring to the program with slides depicting local history.

These ideas came from a Round-Robin request from R-9 on visitor involvement. Credit for this section is due to all those who responded.



Sharing is the keynote of

INTERPRETATION